

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL
MEETING MINUTES

Date: December 17, 2015

Meeting No.: 218

Project: The National: Brewer's Hill P.U.D.

Phase: Schematic

Location: Eaton and O'Donnell Streets

PRESENTATION:

Mr. Nick Mansberger, Architect representing Design Collective, introduced the project to the Panel. As described, the project consists of 365 market rate apartment units and a 500 space structured parking garage within a seven story envelope. On the lower two levels of the project, residential is designed to "wrap" and conceal the parking structure. The top five floors of the project form an opened "C" shape plan which rests on the base of the concealed garage.

The proposed massing concept sets up a strong and clear dichotomy between the curved south east wing, informed by its proximity to the adjacent railroad right of way and industrial sites; and the north and west wings which adhere to a strong urban street grid and industrial warehouse context.

The two story mass as the south end of the project is differentiated in material and color and accommodates the residential entry, lobby and amenity uses for the project. This expressive, sculptural element is on axis to the "mews" established by the adjacent development to the west and serves as the "belvedere" for the open courtyard open.

The exterior skin proposed is composed of material found within the existing neighborhood context and includes masonry, metal panels, and cementitious fiber board.

Mr. Brian Reetz, landscape architect with Design Collective, presented the proposed landscape and streetscape plan. Key components of the plan include a strong cadence of trees along both O'Donnell and Eaton streets and a continuous line of trees defining the eastern edge of the project adjacent to the railroad right of way. The southern point of the site includes a vehicular entry court with limited guest parking, a residential entry plaza and a raised outdoor terrace. The north edge of the site, along O'Donnell Street; provides for a landscape entry court to access walk-up units and a private dog park.

PANEL COMMENTS:

The Panel was extremely pleased with both the thoughtfulness of the presentation and the proposed design. The massing construct proposed was clear, strong and appropriately

informed by the neighborhood context. In order to advance the design, the Panel offered the following comments for careful consideration:

LANDSCAPE/STREETSCAPE:

- Utilize a solar orientation/shade study to inform the landscape design of the enclosed courtyard
- Provide a greater depth than the 12” proposed for planter beds to allow plants to prosper in the courtyard
- Consider upgrading the predominantly concrete sidewalks to pavers
- Consider increasing the width of the proposed 4’ – 6” wide sidewalk along the eastern drive lane
- Provide more detail in the way of elevations of the entry stairs and platform for the proposed walk-up units
- Provide more detailed information on the proposed planting material, street lighting and street furniture

ARCHITECTURE:

Massing:

- Continue to clarify and enhance the massing construct/parti in order to differentiate the exterior treatment of the curved east wing, adjacent to industrial open space; from the north and west wings, adjacent to an existing urban warehouse context. This differentiation should be expressed in the use and application of materials, color, texture, scale and cadence of openings.

Entry/Amenity Pavilion:

- Allow the two-story “pavilion” to acknowledge and respond as the eastern terminus of the “Mews.” Consider relocating the main residential entry/through entry to this point so that the project is embraced within an existing residential community/neighborhood.
- Restudy the expressive cantilevered roof top “eyebrow” projecting over the terrace so it is an integral part of the design of the pavilion and less likely to be a victim of value engineering.
- Restudy the west elevation of the pavilion so the interplay of glass and solid colored panels is more playful and consistent with the east elevation.
- Reconsider the abrupt transition from the seven story residential wings to the “pavilion.” Perhaps elements of the pavilion, like the solid metal panels, can be

incorporated into the base of the residential wings creating a more subtle transition.

Base:

The Panel felt the two-story base on the east and west facades needed the most study as they lack a clarity of design intent. The Panel expressed concern that the second floor residential windows were severely restricted in order to “accommodate” the base, middle, top; tri-part expression. The need for the tri-part expression, in general, was questioned in favor of a more unapologetic contemporary design.

East Elevation:

- Restudy the cadence, scale and articulation of the ground floor window and unit entry openings in juxtaposition with the bold façade fenestration moves proposed on the upper floors.
- If the intent is to introduce the solid colored panels from the Pavilion into the base of the residential wing as a layered, transitional expression; then restudy the disruptive nature of the base at the southern tip of the residential wing (by the parking garage entry)

WEST ELEVATION (*NOTED AS NORTHERN ELEVATION IN THE PRESENTATION*)

- Continue to study the transition from the residential wing to the Pavilion
- Consider creating a stronger two-story base read along the residential wing by raising the four-story framing element and eliminating the top floor horizontal read. A stronger two-story base may allow a better scaled transition to the Pavilion.
- Consider layering colored metal panels employed in the Pavilion into the base of the residential wing so that the Pavilion does not appear “additive” but more integral to the overall building composition.

PANEL ACTION:

The Panel recommended schematic approval with comments and encourages the Design Team to continue to clarify the design intent thru thoughtful editing and decision making and looks forward to seeing the project advance.

Attending:

Jo Corson – The Blue Book

Scott Geczi, Nick Mansperger, Brian Reetz, Mike Goodwin, Miriam Lott – Design Collective

Susan Williams, Tony Cortea – STV

Rick Diehl, Wells Obrecht, Martha O’Brien – Pbrecht

Pam Tyrrell - Kettler

Messrs. Bowden, Rubin, Haresign, Burns*, and Ms. Ilieva - UDARP Panel

Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Christina Hartsfield - Planning